

Remarks

Claims 20-26 remain pending in this application. In the examiner's June 3, 2004 advisory action, it was suggested that the amendments did not place the application in condition for allowance, but that the amendments were entered for purposes of appeal. Claim 20 stands rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,902,423 issued to Bacino. Claims 21-26 stand rejected as being unpatentably obvious considering Bacino in view of alleged admitted prior art in the Applicant's own specification.

Again, we disagree with the examiner's findings. Claim 20, however, has been even further amended to more clearly distinguish this claim over Bacino.

Bacino does not disclose a PTFE material as that which is now claimed. Both independent claims – claims 20 and 26 – include limitations of a PTFE material including short fibrils which interconnect the nodes in each aggregation multidirectionally to form expanded aggregations. This may be seen in FIG. 2 of the application. FIG. 2 shows the short fibrils interconnecting the nodes included in each of the aggregates. Short fibrils like this are not shown in Bacino, or any of the other references cited.

Bacino discloses long fibrils connecting rows of transverse fibrillated nodes. The relatively shorter fiber bundles of Bacino occur in the conventional sorts of PTFE fibrils found between unexpanded PTFE nodes. In Bacino the short bundles extend transversely between aggregations. There is no interconnecting by short fibrils between the nodes contained within each aggregation. Bacino transverse/relatively short bundles extend between nodes in different aggregations. Thus, these bundles do nothing to reduce the densities of each aggregation. The short fibrils of the present invention do, however. Because this difference is, and has been claimed, we believe this application is now in condition for allowance.

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Therefore, because all of the claimed limitations are not shown in the prior art, it is respectfully requested that all outstanding rejections be withdrawn, and claims 20-26 pass on to issue. If, however, the Examiner believes that any outstanding issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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